

## **Do Canada's mid-sized cities have the upper-hand? New Policy School report**

For Immediate release

May 3, 2017

CALGARY- Today, Canada is over 80 per cent urbanized and Canadian cities face issues that are changing the way they govern, provide services and finance their operations. Urban policy research has traditionally focused on large metropolitan areas, such as Toronto, with more than five million in population. But what about cities that are considered mid-sized, with less than two million such as Calgary and Halifax? How do they measure up to the larger cities? Do they have the same issues? Benefits?

Today, The School of Public Policy and author, Almos T. Tassonyi, released a report that examines how mid-sized cities, with populations between 300,000 and two million, can strive to innovate, to act autonomously and to implement complex policies and programs within larger constraints.

According to Tassonyi, "While the municipal level of government is viewed as being at the bottom of the hierarchy of governments, many city governments are larger, more innovative and more versatile than the provincial governments that oversee them. Municipal officials have as much expertise in policy-making as do their provincial counterparts. While provincial and federal regulations would seem to often block mid-sized cities' capabilities for policy-making, they also offer a solid basis from which to operate. Property taxes provide stable revenue sources while constraints on borrowing mean protection for cities' credit ratings along with access to capital markets. The challenge is forging a workable balance between constraint from without and a move toward autonomy from within."

It falls upon provincial and federal governments to recognize what municipalities are capable of achieving, and to make appropriate legislative and regulatory changes that will permit more innovation and policy-making locally. Loosening the constraints under which cities operate will create the environment for further improvement and innovation in Canada's municipal governments.

The report can be found online at [www.policyschool.ca/publications/](http://www.policyschool.ca/publications/)

-30-

To request an interview with the author(s) or for more information please contact:

Morten Paulsen  
403.220.2540  
[Morten.paulsen2@ucalgary.ca](mailto:Morten.paulsen2@ucalgary.ca)